

CALIFORNIA RIVER PARKWAYS GRANT PROGRAM – PROPOSITION 84

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

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Frequently Asked Questions Applicable to Both River Parkways and Urban Streams Restoration Grant Programs:

Q: Have the River Parkways and Urban Streams Restoration programs been merged into one program?

A: No. The grant solicitation process of the two programs has been merged. Both programs still have many differences, both major and minor, but also contained enough similarities to facilitate a merged grant solicitation process. Overall, the Resources Agency will still administer the River Parkways Grant Program and the Department of Water Resources will administer the Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program.

Q: How much is available in this round for each grant program?

A: River Parkways: 30.9 million
Urban Streams Restoration: \$9.1 million

Q: What are the minimum and maximum amounts that will be awarded for individual grants?

A: The River Parkways Grant Program does not have a minimum or maximum grant amount. The Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program does not have a minimum grant amount, but does have a maximum grant amount of \$1 million per award.

Q: If applying for both programs, do applicants have to choose the funding amount to apply for under each grant?

A: No. The final allocation of grant funds is dependent on the project's final ranking for each grant program, eligible costs for each program and best utilization of available grant funds.

Q: How many funding rounds will there be?

A: This is the first round of funding under Proposition 84 for both grant programs. We anticipate one additional round of funding for each grant program.

Q: When are the grant applications due and awards announced?

A: Applications for both programs are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at the Resources Agency. Awards should be announced by the end of June 2009.

Q: When must the funds be expended?

A: June 30, 2013 (contingent on budget decisions).

Q: Are State Agencies eligible to apply to both programs?

A: State Agencies may apply for River Parkway funding but they are not eligible to apply for Urban Streams Restoration funding. However, they can be involved as project partners.

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Q: Are Federal Agencies or Indian tribes eligible to apply for a grant from either program?

A: No. Neither Federal Agencies nor Indian tribes are eligible applicants for River Parkways or Urban Streams Restoration grant funding. However, they can be involved as project partners.

Q: Does CEQA need to be completed prior to submitting a grant application and can you explain how CEQA factors into project readiness?

A: No. However, the application must, at a minimum, include a draft Initial Study, checklist or Notice of Exemption and an explanation as to how CEQA will be completed (e.g., full EIR, Negative Declaration, etc.). Grant funds may be used to complete the CEQA requirements, within one year of the grant award, unless otherwise specified. Funds for project implementation, however, will not be released until CEQA is completed.

Q: Are permits required to be completed prior to submitting an application? Will priority or preference points be given to projects where permits have already been obtained?

A: No. Final permits are not required when submitting an application. The status of the permits may be considered, however, when evaluating factors such as due diligence and project readiness.

Q: My organization has several eligible projects that we feel are competitive. Should we submit one application for all projects, or individual applications for each?

A: Submit one application for each project as defined on page 67 of the guidelines. For the Urban Streams Restoration Program, a single project may include work on multiple sites (e.g. vegetation management or bioengineering work). A single project under the River Parkways program would have all project components located in the same physical area.

Q: Will I be penalized for submitting more than one application?

A: No. The committee will evaluate and score each project on its own merit. Furthermore, projects eligible for funding from both the River Parkways and the Urban Streams Restoration programs will be evaluated and scored independently for each program. In such cases, the project will ultimately receive two scores, one for the River Parkways program and one for the Urban Streams Restoration program.

Q: If I apply for funding from both programs, can I receive an award from one program but not the other program?

A: Yes. It is possible for a project to score competitively in one program but not in the other program.

Q: Will projects that apply for both programs receive points from both programs and therefore generally score higher than projects that only apply for one grant program?

A: No. Projects that apply for both grant programs will be evaluated and scored independently for each program.

Q: How will you determine whether or not you are going to schedule a site visit?

A: Each program will independently determine the projects selected for site visits. The total number of projects selected for site visits for each program depends on committee ranking, number of applications received, requested funding amounts, etc. A project applying for funding under both grant programs may also receive a site visit for one program but not the other program. We anticipate conducting site visits in April-May 2009.

Q: I understand the grant programs usually reimburse (pay in arrears) for work already completed. Is this also true for property acquisitions?

A: Because of the large up-front monetary demands of a property acquisition, the Grantee may request an advance prior to the actual land purchase. In such a case, the grant program will advance the funds into a separate, interest-bearing escrow account on behalf of the Grantee.

Q: According to the guidelines, a project involving the acquisition of property purchased in excess of the Fair Market Value (FMV) would be considered an ineligible project. Could it be considered an eligible project if the grantee found the means to cover the amount in excess of FMV?

A: No. The State is only interested in participating in acquisitions purchased at the approved Fair Market Value.

Q: The grant guidelines require prevailing wages be paid for any public work projects financed with Proposition 84 grant funds. How is this requirement applicable to a city (the grantee) that plans on using their Public Works Department to complete the project?

A: Labor Code Section 1771 specifically exempts the prevailing wage requirement for work carried out by a public agency with its own staff or employees. For more information on "prevailing wage", refer to <http://workitout.ca.gov/faq.asp?id=143>

Frequently Asked Questions Applicable to the River Parkways Grant Program:

Q: The River Parkways guidelines include a definition of a River Parkway that states it needs to be "adjacent to a river or stream". Would parkways adjacent to other water bodies (e.g., lakes, wetlands, flood control channels, aqueducts, etc.) be eligible for this program?

A: A project must be adjacent to a river or stream/creek. Applicants are required to specify the location of the river or stream/creek as part of a complete application (see item #4, Site Plan, on page 24 of the guidelines).

Q: Are costs directly related to the grant project, but incurred prior to the project award date eligible for reimbursement?

A: No. Costs must be incurred during the project performance period to be eligible.

Q: What is the Project Performance Period?

A: The project performance period establishes the beginning and end dates of the grant agreement. Eligible costs during this period can be funded from the grant.

Q: Can we use an overhead rate for personnel and/or employee services?

A: No. Costs must be directly tracked to a specific purpose, project and employee with supporting documentation. Personnel and/or employee services costs reimbursed by the River Parkways grant must be based on the actual employee wage or salary, plus benefits, and cannot include indirect or overhead costs, or be based on an employee's billable rate. See page 67 for a definition of overhead costs.

Q: Are matching funds required and how does it impact scoring?

A: Matching funds are not required for the River Parkway program. However, up to five points can be earned by securing other sources of funds.

Q: Must the applicant have site control/land tenure?

A: Yes. However, there are various ways to meet the site control/tenure requirement, (e.g., fee ownership, long-term agreements and easements). Land tenure must include the right to develop, operate and maintain all lands included in the project for the period required in the guidelines. Also see the Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program FAQs below.

Q. If we meet two statutory conditions, can we get additional points if other conditions are met as well?

A: Yes. An applicant may earn up to 30 maximum points (15 points for each statutory condition) in the Project Requirements and Statutory Conditions section based on the two statutory conditions met (as indicated on the Application Form, page 10). Additional points may be earned in the Additional Project Characteristics and Benefits section on page 22.

Q: Will an application go forward for review without a letter from the Willing Seller?

A: No. Applications must include a letter stating that the seller is willing to enter into negotiations to sell the real property for a purchase price not to exceed Fair Market Value should grant funds be awarded.

Q: Can I submit an application to both acquire and develop the same piece of property?

A: No. Projects that include both acquisition and development are not eligible for River Parkways funding. River Parkways Grant funding must be used for either an acquisition-only project or for a development-only project, not both. Also see Urban Streams Restoration FAQs below.

Frequently Asked Questions Applicable to the Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program:

Q. Clarify what is considered an "urban" creek or stream.

A. As defined in Section 7048(e) of the California Water Code, an "urban creek" means "a creek which crosses built-up residential, commercial, or industrial property, or which crosses land where, in the near future, the land use will be residential, commercial, or industrial".

Q. Would projects in rural residential areas qualify?

A. Areas zoned rural residential where parcels are five acres or less in size will qualify.

Q. What about restoring channelized sections of stream?

A. Projects that restore environmental and recreational benefits to streams previously channelized for flood control are eligible. However, a project that includes removing the concrete and re-establishing the natural stream meander and floodplain topography would be more competitive.

Q. What is the demand for grants under this program?

A. Strong competition exists for grant funding under the Urban Streams Restoration Program. The ratio of grant funding requested to what is awarded has historically been at a ratio of 3:1.

Q: Are matching funds required and how does it impact scoring?

A: Matching funds are not required for the Urban Streams Restoration program, but projects with matching funds (monetary or in-kind funds) are generally more competitive. Additionally, up to ten points can be earned by securing other sources of funds or providing in-kind services.

Q. Our organization will be co-sponsoring, not sponsoring the project. If our application is selected, will we also have to sign the contract? If so, why?

A. Yes. Both the sponsor and co-sponsor must sign the grant agreement. This is a requirement to confirm that both organizations are committed to implementing the project. The grant agreement does not specify how much work will be implemented by each co-sponsor. The division of work and responsibilities for the project are left to the sponsor and co-sponsor to decide. Applications that show an active working relationship between both co-sponsors will be more competitive.

Q. Will the Urban Streams Program fund mitigation work required for another project?

A. No. However, proposed project work that goes "above and beyond" mitigation requirements is eligible.

Q. Will the Program fund planning efforts?

A. Planning efforts for stream restoration projects can be funded if a significant portion of the project is devoted to implementation.

Q. Will the Urban Streams Program fund stream restoration projects to improve fish habitat?

A. Yes. The proposed project may include fish habitat improvement but must also address flooding or erosion management to be eligible.

Q. Can we use Urban Streams Restoration Program funds to establish a stream or watershed education program for our schools and/or the general public?

A. We encourage projects that increase public awareness of stream restoration methods and watershed management as part of an overall project. However, the central focus of the project must address flooding or erosion problems along urban streams using methods that preserve and enhance the natural environment.

Q. Will the Program fund trail access projects?

A. A project funded through the Urban Streams Restoration Program must have flood management, erosion control, or environmental restoration as its main objective, but may include some trail work.

Q. We need to monitor our project for post-implementation success. Would this grant program fund monitoring?

A. Yes. Initial monitoring of the project, including plant establishment, adaptive management, and project assessment are eligible if completed during the project performance period of the grant. Monitoring requirements that extend beyond the project performance period established in the Grant will have to be covered through in-kind and/or volunteer support.

Q. What are the permitting requirements?

A. Specific permitting requirements are dependent upon the proposed project scope. To assist applicants, page 42 of the Guidelines provides a list of potential permits and approvals that may be required for a project.

Grantees are responsible for all relevant permits, authorizations, and/or approvals that must be obtained prior to commencing work on a project. If any of the permits for the project have been completed prior to applying, [please include copies in your application package.](#)

Q: Are costs directly related to the grant project, but incurred prior to the project award date eligible for reimbursement?

A: The Urban Stream Restoration Program regulations allow the Department of Water Resources, at its discretion, to reimburse eligible project costs incurred prior to applying for or entering into a contract for grant funding. However, applicants incur these costs at their own risk and would need to provide justification for reimbursement if selected for funding.

Q: Can Urban Streams Restoration funding be used to pay for overhead charges related to the project?

A: Yes. Some overhead expenses are eligible for reimbursement and may be included as a project cost, dependent on the complexity of the project preparation, planning, coordination, construction, etc. See page 7 and page 67 of the grant guidelines for further information.

Q: Can I submit an application to both acquire and develop the same piece of property?

A: Yes. Urban Streams Restoration acquisition projects must have an implementation component as well.

Q: Would the Urban Streams Program fund park acquisitions?

A: Land acquisitions funded by the Urban Streams Restoration Program are for the purpose of securing stream and floodplain areas that, if either left undeveloped or restored, will reduce or eliminate flooding events in the surrounding community. If the property in question will serve as both a seasonal parkway and a floodplain area during high water events, the Program will consider a land acquisition.

Q: Would the Urban Streams Restoration Program fund easements as well as Fee Title property acquisitions?

A: Yes. The Urban Streams Restoration Program will fund conservation easements.

Q: For a property acquisition, who should the new landowner or easement holder be?

A: Generally, the local agency co-sponsor. However, in some cases the property could transfer to the citizen's group or another agency.

Q: Must the applicant have site control/land tenure to be eligible?

A: Generally speaking, yes. However, if the project improvements are relatively minor (e.g. revegetation or removal of exotic plants) then, at the Department of Water Resources' discretion, the applicant may obtain signed letters from the property owners which demonstrate knowledge and support of the proposed project and allows the grantees to access, implement, and operate and maintain the project (if necessary).